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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (canceled)

2. (currently amended) A method according to claim 18 wherein said data files include graphical information.

3. (currently amended) A method according to claim 18 wherein said requester-selected data format represents a version of the data file that is compatible with a particular software application environment for using the requested data file.

4. (currently amended) A method according to claim 18 wherein the repository resides behind a secure firewall, and further including the steps of:

providing a meta data directory outside of said firewall; said meta data directory indicating the contents of the repository.

5. (original) A method according to claim 4 further including the step of:

providing periodic updates of said meta data directory, said updates reflecting changes to data in the data repository.

6. (currently amended) A method according to claim 18 wherein said determining step further including the steps of:

providing an access control element including data indicating whether a requester is to be permitted to access said requested data file.

7. (currently amended) A method according to claim 18 wherein said repository resides behind a secure firewall and wherein said translated data file is retained at a response repository outside of said firewall in response to said request.

8. (original) A method according to claim 7 wherein said data file is retained at said response

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repository for a predetermined time period.

9. (original) A method according to claim 8 wherein said data file is accessible from said response repository by any authorized requester.

10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) A method according to claim 10 wherein said translated data file is retained at a response repository outside of said firewall in response to said request.

12. (original) A method according to claim 11 wherein said translated data file is retained at said response repository for a predetermined time period.

13. (original) A method according to claim 12 wherein said translated data file is accessible from said response repository by any authorized requester.

14. (original) A method according to claim 13 wherein said translating step is undertaken at said response repository.

15. (previously presented) A method according to claim 14 wherein said translated data file retained at said response repository is further translated into an alternative data format selectable from at least one available data format in said list of stored data formats, said alternative data format selected by an authorized requester.

16. (canceled)

17. (canceled)

18. (currently amended) A method for providing access to data files stored in a data repository

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residing behind a secure firewall, the method comprising the steps of:

_____ providing an access control system outside of said firewall for receiving requests for data files;

_____ receiving a request at the access control system for a data file from a requester;

_____ determining via said access control system if the requested data file is stored in the repository;

_____ passing said request to said repository if said requester is authorized and said requested data file is stored in said repository;

_____ receiving said request at a staging database within said firewall;

_____ displaying at least one available data format selected from a list of stored data formats, said at least one available data format selectable by said requester;

_____ determining based on said received request which of said stored data formats is to be used to perform said translating into said requested data format;

_____ using the results of said determination to retrieve the data file having the determined format from said repository;

_____ translating the requested data file from a stored data format into a requester-selected data format;

_____ providing said translated data file from said repository to said staging database; and

_____ making said translated data file accessible to said requester if it is determined that said requester is authorized;

_____ A method according to claim 17 wherein said access control system includes a response repository and wherein said translated data file is transferred from said staging database to said response repository and retained at the response repository in response to said request.

19. (original) A method according to claim 18 wherein said translated data file is retained at said response repository for a predetermined time period.

20. (original) A method according to claim 19 wherein said translated data file is accessible from said response repository by any authorized requester.

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21. (currently amended) A method according to claim 18 further comprising the steps of:
providing the requester with the status of the fulfillment of the request for the data file.

22. (currently amended) A method according to claim 18 further comprising the step of:
storing a requester's format preferences for the requested data file.

23. (canceled)

24. (currently amended) A program storage device according to claim 2340 wherein said data files
include graphical information.

25. (currently amended) A program storage device according to claim 2340 wherein said
requester-selected data format represents a version of the data file that is compatible with a
particular software application environment for using the requested data file.

26. (currently amended) A program storage device according to claim 2340 wherein the repository
resides behind a secure firewall, and further including the steps of:
providing a meta data directory outside of said firewall; said meta data directory indicating
the contents of the repository.

27. (original) A program storage device according to claim 26 further including the step of:
providing periodic updates of said meta data directory, said updates reflecting changes to
data in the data repository.

28. (currently amended) A program storage device according to claim 2340 wherein said
determining step further including the steps of:
providing an access control element including data indicating whether a requester is to be
permitted to access said requested data file.

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29. (currently amended) A program storage device according to claim ~~23~~40 wherein said repository resides behind a secure firewall and wherein said translated data file is retained at a response repository outside of said firewall in response to said request.

30. (original) A program storage device according to claim 29 wherein said data file is retained at said response repository for a predetermined time period.

31. (original) A program storage device according to claim 30 wherein said data file is accessible from said response repository by any authorized requester.

32. (canceled)

33. (currently amended) A program storage device according to claim ~~32~~40 wherein said translated data file is retained at a response repository outside of said firewall in response to said request.

34. (original) A program storage device according to claim 33 wherein said translated data file is retained at said response repository for a predetermined time period.

35. (original) A program storage device according to claim 34 wherein said translated data file is accessible from said response repository by any authorized requester.

36. (original) A program storage device according to claim 35 wherein said translating step is undertaken at said response repository.

37. (previously presented) A program storage device according to claim 36 wherein said translated data file retained at said response repository is further translated into an alternative data format selectable from at least one available data format in said list of stored data formats, said alternative

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data format selected by an authorized requester.

38. (canceled)

39. (canceled)

40. (currently amended) A program storage device readable by a digital processing apparatus and tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the digital processing apparatus to perform method steps for providing access to data files stored in a data repository, the method comprising the steps of:

providing an access control system outside of said firewall for receiving requests for data files;

receiving a request at the access control system for a data file from a requester;

determining via said access control system if the requested data file is stored in the repository;

passing said request to said repository if said requester is authorized and said requested data file is stored in said repository;

receiving said request at a staging database within said firewall;

displaying at least one available data format selected from a list of stored data formats, said at least one available data format selectable by said requester;

determining based on said received request which of said stored data formats is to be used to perform said translating into said requested data format;

using the results of said determination to retrieve the data file having the determined format from said repository;

translating the requested data file from a stored data format into a requester-selected data format;

providing said translated data file from said repository to said staging database; and

making said translated data file accessible to said requester if it is determined that said requester is authorized;

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~~_____ A program storage device according to claim 39 wherein said access control system~~
includes a response repository and wherein said translated data file is transferred from said staging
database to said response repository and retained at the response repository in response to said
request.

41. (original) A program storage device according to claim 40 wherein said translated data file is
retained at said response repository for a predetermined time period.

42. (original) A program storage device according to claim 41 wherein said translated data file is
accessible from said response repository by any authorized requester.

43. (currently amended) A program storage device according to claim ~~23~~ 40 further comprising
the steps of:

providing the requester with the status of the fulfillment of the request for the data file.

44. (currently amended) A program storage device according to claim ~~23~~ 40 further comprising the
step of:

storing a requester's format preferences for the requested data file.

45. (canceled)

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